

Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication: by Leaders for Leaders (Part 2)

**Satellite Conference
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Faculty

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Working With the Media

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Disasters Are Media Events

- We need the media to be there.
- Give important protective actions for the public.
- Know how to reach their audiences and what their audiences need.

How To Work With Reporters

- Reporters want a front seat to the action and all information NOW.
- Preparation will save relationships.
- If you don't have the facts, tell them the process.
- Reality Check: 70,000 media outlets in U.S. Media cover the news 24/7.

Information Sought By Media

- Casualty numbers, condition, treatment
- Property damage
- Response and relief activities
- Resulting effects (anxiety, stress)
- Questions are predictable

Media and Crisis Coverage

- Evidence strongly suggests that coverage is more factual when reporters have more information. They become more interpretative when they have less information.
- What should we conclude?

Command Post

- Media will expect a command post. Official channels that work well will discourage reliance on nonofficial channels.
- Be media-friendly at the command post—prepare for them to be on site.

Media Availability or Press Conferences “In Person” Tips

- Determine in advance who will answer questions about specific subject matters.
- Assume that every mike is “alive” the entire time.
- Sitting or standing?

Two Press Conference Killers

- Have “hangers on” from your organization circling the room
- Being visible to the media/public while waiting to begin the press conference

Writing for the Media During a Crisis

- The pressure will be tremendous from all quarters.
- It must be fast and accurate.
- It’s like cooking a turkey when people are starving.
- If information isn’t finalized, explain the process.

Role Of A Spokesperson In An Emergency

- Take your organization from an “it” to a “we”
- Remove the psychological barriers within the audience
- Ultimately, reduce the incidence of illness, injury, and death by getting it right

Great Spokesperson Step 1

- It's more than "acting natural." Every organization has an identity. Try to embody that identity.
- Example: CDC has a history of going into harm's way to help people. We humbly go where we are asked. We value our partners and won't steal the show. Therefore, a spokesperson would express a desire to help, show courage, and express the value of partners. "Committed but not showy."

Great Spokesperson Step 2

- Know your audience
- Your audience is NOT the reporter interviewing you

Spokesperson Recommendations

- Stay within the scope of your responsibility
- Tell the truth
- Follow up on issues
- Expect criticism

Your Interview Rights

- Know who will do the interview
- Know and limit the interview to agreed subjects
- Set limits on time and format
- Ask who else will be or has been interviewed
- Decline to be interviewed
- Decline to answer a question

You Do Not Have the Right To:

- Embarrass or argue with a reporter
- Demand that your remarks not be edited
- Demand the opportunity to edit the piece
- Insist that an adversary not be interviewed

You Do Not Have the Right To:

- Lie
- Demand that an answer you've given not be used
- State what you are about to say is "off the record" or not attributable to you

Sensational or Unrelated Questions

“Bridges” back to what you want to say:

- “What I think you are really asking is . . .”
- “The overall issue is . . .”
- “What’s important to remember is . . .”
- “It’s our policy to not discuss [topic], but what I can tell you . . .”

Effective Nonverbal Communication

- Do maintain eye contact
- Do maintain an open posture
- Do not retreat behind physical barriers such as podiums or tables
- Do not frown or show anger or disbelief through facial expression
- Do not dress in a way that emphasizes the differences between you and your audience

Grief In Context

- Circumstances of the death
- Nature of the relationship
- Experienced loss before
- Any secondary losses



Stakeholder/ Partner Communication

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Stakeholder/Partner Communication

- Stakeholders have a special connection to you and your involvement in the emergency.
- They are interested in how the incident will impact them.

Stakeholder/Partner Communication

- Partners have a working relationship to you and collaborate in an official capacity on the emergency issue or other issues.
- They are interested in fulfilling their role in the incident and staying informed.

5 Mistakes With Stakeholders

- Inadequate access
- Lack of clarity
- No energy for response
- Too little, too late
- Perception of arrogance

Stakeholders Can Be . . .

- Advocate—maintain loyalty
- Adversary—discourage negative action
- Ambivalent—keep neutral or move to advocate

Community Relations! Why?

- Community acceptance through community involvement (door-to-door)
- Involving stakeholders is a way to advance trust through transparency
- Our communities, our social capital, are a critical element of our nation's security

Dealing With Angry People

Anger arises when people. . .

- Have been hurt
- Feel threatened by risks out of their control
- Are not respected
- Have their fundamental beliefs challenged

Sometimes, anger arises when . . .

- Media arrive
- Damages may be in play

Don't Lecture At The Townhall

- Easy but not effective
- Doesn't change thoughts/behaviors
- Key: don't give a solution, rather help audience discover solution by asking questions

High-Outrage Public Meetings

“Do's”

- Limit introductory remarks to 5 minutes
- Ask questions. If they're talking they're involved
- The best way to deal with criticism and outrage by an audience is to acknowledge that it exists (Never say, “I know how you feel” say “I know you need to talk about this and I'm here to listen”)

High-Outrage Public Meetings

“Don’ts”

- Verbal abuse! Don’t blow your stack
 - Try to bring along a neutral third party who can step in and diffuse the situation
- Don’t look for one answer that fits all
- Don’t promise what you can’t deliver

2 Simple Tips To Gain Acceptance

- Accumulate “yeses”
- Don’t say “yes, but”—say “yes, and”

Media and Public Health Law

Model Emergency Health Powers Act

- Protection of civil liberties balanced with need to stop transmission of disease
- Explain what law covers and why
- Laws address: quarantine, vaccination, property issues, access to medical records

Protecting The Public From Infectious Diseases

- Detention – temporary hold
- Isolation – separation from others for period of communicability
- Quarantine – restricts activities of well persons exposed

First Amendment

- “In the First Amendment the founding fathers gave the free press protection it must have to fulfill its essential role in our democracy. The press was to serve the governed, not the governors.”

—New York Times Co. v U.S., 403 U.S. 713 (1971)

Media's Right To Acquire News

- Press has right to acquire news from any source by any lawful means
- No Constitutional right to special access
- Information not available to the public:
 - Crime scene
 - Disasters
 - Police station
 - Hospital lab
 - Other places

Access May Be Restricted

- Interference with legitimate law enforcement action
- Law enforcement perimeter
- Crime scene
- Disaster scene

Right To Acquire Information

- Available or open to the public
- Place or process historically open to the public:
 - Hospitals?
 - Jails?
 - Courtrooms?
 - Meeting/conference rooms?

Media's Right Of Publication

- Once information is acquired
- Ability to restrict information;
 - Severely limited
 - Heavy burden to prevent or prohibit

Minneapolis Star Tribune v. U.S., 713 F Supp. 1308
(S.Minn, 1988)

CDC's Principles Of Communication For Public

- Communication will be open, honest, and based on sound science, conveying accurate information
- Information will not be withheld solely to protect CDC or the government from criticism or embarrassment
- Information will be released consistent with the Freedom of Information Act

Upcoming Programs

For a complete listing of all programs,
visit our website:

www.adph.org/alphtn